

CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

Adopted by 2nd National Convention of the Workers Party

Statement on the War Crisis

(Adopted Unanimously)

1. For the past six months, after more than a year of deliberate preparation, the armies of Italian Fascism have driven their attack against the Ethiopian peoples. Impelled by the intolerable strains of internal social and economic contradictions, Mussolini and the Italian bourgeoisie have sought a solution in open imperialist aggression against the last of the independent nations of Africa.

2. The war in Africa demonstrates that the conflicts of world imperialism have reached the stage of armed struggle for a re-making of boundaries, and a re-division of territories and colonial possessions. Though the Italian campaign in Ethiopia may not lead immediately and directly to a world struggle of the imperialist powers, this delay can prove no more than temporary.

The war in Ethiopia must be understood as the prelude to the new imperialist world war.

3. In the preparation for the Italian seizure of Ethiopia, and during the course of the conflict, the League of Nations has once more demonstrated beyond any possible doubt its true role. The League is not in any sense whatever "the defender of peace." It is the legal and hypocritical cover for the maneuvering of the dominant imperialist powers. From the time Ethiopia first invoked League assistance in December, 1934, up to the actual outbreak of the war, the League negotiations served to permit uninterrupted preparations for the hostilities by Italy, and to deter defensive preparation by Ethiopia. The League has been utilized, throughout, above all to serve the ends of British imperialism. Behind its cover, the agents of Great Britain, France and Italy have haggle over the price in terms of treaties, guarantees, protection and territories, which each was willing to pay to preserve its own interests. The threat and use of League sanctions have been made not to save Ethiopia—which the League itself has repeatedly offered to sacrifice—but to safeguard British colonial possessions and lines of communication, to try to close the opening for Germany in Central Europe, and in general to uphold the needs of the dominant member-states. The League of Nations is in every respect the agency, not of peace, but of imperialist aggression.

4. No less than the European powers is U. S. imperialism bound by the iron chain of cause and effect to the events in Africa and to the new world conflict which they herald. The sentimental dream of U. S. isolation, Roosevelt's promises that the U. S. will remain "free and untangled", have no more force than the unctuous phrases of Wilson in 1916. "Neutrality" and "Neutrality Legislation" are only decorated counters in the imperialist game, sugar-coated formulations of different phases of the U. S. war policy. The U. S. will, on the contrary, play the dominant and decisive role in the new imperialist struggle. Behind its pacifist covering, the Roosevelt government is pouring more funds into its war machine than any other nation in the world. Both navy and army are constructed on a purely offensive strategic basis. The U. S. bourgeoisie, waiting and preparing, expects to intervene in the later stages of the world struggle, when the other powers are mutually exhausted, to achieve the world domination of U. S. finance-capital.

5. The U.S.S.R. cannot avoid implication in the world conflict. The very life of the workers' state is threatened by the approach of war. A central task of the struggle against war is the defense of the U.S.S.R. But, in the last analysis, this defense can be based only upon the revolutionary advance of the international proletariat. Stalinist diplomacy, on the contrary, to an ever increasing degree, serves solely to discredit the international proletariat, break up the revolutionary struggle against imperialist war, and thus to undermine the real defense of the U.S.S.R. Basing itself not upon the international working class, but upon military pacts with bourgeois states, upon diplomatic deals, appeals to pacifist and liberal anti-war sentiment, and the maneuvers of the League of Nations, Soviet foreign policy promotes the most disastrous illusions in the minds of the workers, hampers and disrupts their struggle against the exploiters at home, and acts in effect to further the interests of French and British imperialism.

The struggle against imperialist war requires the constant exposure of the foreign policy of Stalinism.

6. One of the most dangerous illusions fostered by the diplomacy of the Soviet Union, in company with demoralized liberals, reformists, pacifists of all shades, and Roosevelt himself is the notion that the world is now divided between "peace-loving democratic" nations and "war-loving fascist" nations. This notion is part of the preparation for support of the "peace-loving nations" in the coming war. Marxism rejects and dispels this illusion or any form of it. The idea that there are peace-loving as opposed to war-loving capitalist nations, like the idea that one or another nation is "guilty" in an imperialist war, is at best formalistic ethical sentimentality, not political realism. The causes of war are to be found in the internal structure of world capitalism, operating within all nations. The national state of every capitalist nation, without exception, is the political instrument of the class enemy, the first and implacable enemy of that nation's proletariat. The revolutionary party can make no distinction between "good" and "bad" capitalist states. It is the enemy of every capitalist state, to the death.

7. Equally illusory and disastrous is the belief that the struggle against war can be aided by support of governmental "sanctions against the aggressor", whether applied by individual capitalist states directly, or indirectly through the League of Nations, which is nothing else than the puppet instrument of the imperialist powers. Support of governmental sanctions in any form—no matter what the "modifications" and "criticisms"—necessarily means collaboration with the sanction-applying capitalist state. Such collaboration, in turn, necessarily means support of the war policy of the given capitalist state. The revolutionary struggle against war is always the struggle against the capitalist state. Collaboration of any kind is always, and must be, social-patriotism and betrayal.

8. The same conclusion holds with equal force with reference to the support of "Neutrality Legislation" in this country. Once again, support of Neutrality Legislation necessarily means the attempt to conduct the struggle against war in collaboration with the imperialist government, and thus can be conceived as nothing else than a form of social-patriotism. Imperialism, which makes wars, can never be an ally in the struggle against war. The struggle against war must be everywhere and always the independent revolutionary struggle against imperialism itself.

9. At the outbreak of the last imperialist war, the Second International revealed its internal degeneration by betraying the working class to the class enemy, by espousing the cause of national defense and patriotism, by a truce with the bourgeoisie in the interests of "national unity", by going over to social-patriotism and social-chauvinism. Already, before the outbreak of the new war, the leaders of the Socialist and Labour International, together with the major repetition of the betrayal, are already preparing to turn over their following to the war-makers. In England, the Labour Party, by calling for government applied sanctions and the closing of the Suez Canal, and by supporting the main line of the Baldwin government, has once again taken the position of national unity (that is, solidarity with the class enemy) before the war danger, and of fully developed social-patriotism—to defend the interests of the bourgeoisie

against "Hitler aggressions, and to 'implement the League Covenant' by government sanctions. The Bauer-Dan-Zyromski Thesis openly advocates support of the wars of "democratic nations" against "fascist nations". As early as August of last year, the Executive Committee of the Socialist and Labour International adopted a program of full-blooded social-patriotism.

The struggle against imperialist war means the struggle against the Second International.

10. During the past two years, the Communist International has passed from a policy which weakened and disoriented the revolutionary struggle against war to an active espousal of the politics of class truce and social-patriotism. By the Franco-Soviet Pact, the Stalin-Laval communique, the conduct of the Soviet Union representatives in the League during the Ethiopian crisis, and above all by the Seventh Congress of the C.I., the Communist International stands unmasked as the heir of social-democracy's betrayal on the issue of war, announcing itself as ready to do the hangman's job of turning over the proletariat of England, France and the U.S. to their national bourgeoisie in the coming war, in return for paper promises of protection for the borders of the Soviet Union. In England, the Communist party applauds the position of the Labour Party; in France, the Communist party supports enthusiastically the worst betrayals of Blum and Herriot; in Czechoslovakia, the Communist party votes for Benes and openly calls on the masses to fight for the Czechoslovakian bourgeoisie and thus for its master, French imperialism; in the U.S., the Communist party repeatedly declares its pledge to support the government in a war against Japan. The C.I. and its sections take the lead in demanding League and governmental sanctions against "aggressor" nations; in calling for support of democratic nations against fascist nations; in fostering the most degraded forms of pacifism; in pushing "vigorous" Neutrality Legislation on the part of the U.S. government. Throughout the world the Communist International prepares the sacrifice of the working class on the altar of imperialism.

The struggle against imperialist war means everywhere the relentless struggle against the Third International.

11. Throughout the world the only organized forces systematically advocating and conducting the revolutionary struggle against imperialism war are the parties and groupings of the Fourth Internationalists. The Workers Party of the U.S. carries on this struggle in the closest solidarity with its comrades in all countries. Against the betrayers, the Workers Party rejects every form of social-patriotism and social-chauvinism; it rejects every conception of national unity and national defense; it rejects all ideas of truce with the bourgeoisie state, democratic or fascist; it exposes the role of the League of Nations as the pawn of the imperialist member states; it opposes all forms of governmental sanctions or neutrality legislation; it rejects the sentimental illusions of pacifists and petty-bourgeois liberals; above all it directs its attacks against the enemy at home, against U.S. imperialism.

The Workers Party places no reliance on the "peaceful" intentions of bourgeois-democratic nations, nor upon spineless "united fronts" of liberals, ministers, bourgeois workers' clubs and "anti-war" professionals; on the contrary, it attacks the whole conception of such reliance as aiding and promoting, and not in any way hindering the preparations for war.

The Workers Party calls for the continued effort to defend the Ethiopian peoples against Italian aggression, for the defense of the U.S.S.R., for unremitting struggle against the coming imperialist war. But for this defense and this struggle, the Workers Party calls at the same time for the sole means by which they can be, in fact, conducted: for the independent and autonomous action of the working class. It is the international working class, especially the Italian working class, together with the oppressed colonial peoples, who are the true allies of the Ethiopian peoples—not "peace-loving" Britain, nor the League of Nations, nor Stalin-Laval, nor Roosevelt, nor their own Christian Emperor and semi-feudal chieftains. It is the independent sanctions of the working class, its own boycotts, strikes, defense funds mass demonstrations that can aid the battles of the Ethiopian peoples, not the sanctions of finance-capital and its puppet states. And likewise for the defense of the U.S.S.R. and the struggle against the approach of world war, it is only the independent action of the working class together with its allies under its leadership which gives hope to the working and exploited masses—a struggle not in collaboration with the bourgeoisie through the national state, but in ever sharper attack against the bourgeoisie and the national state.

The struggle against war is not and cannot be conceived as an "independent" struggle, having a special status above class conflicts. It is an integral part of the revolutionary struggle for workers' power. The class struggle, means—not suspension of the class conflict until the war crisis passes—but the intensification of class conflict and the preparation to turn the imperialist war into a civil war for the overthrow of the bourgeois state and the victory of the workers.

More clearly than any other phase of revolutionary activity does the struggle against war attest the international character of the revolutionary movement. It is an international struggle and must be conducted in terms of an international strategy, through an integrated international organization. Thus the struggle against war poses, in the most intense form, the central task of the present period: the building of the Fourth International, the dynamic generator to drive forward the revolutionary advance of the working class. Threatening as is the oncoming of the new war, relatively weak numerically as are the forces now ranged against it, there is no reason to despair. Out of the last world war came the first great step of the world revolution. Yet, in 1914, the internationalists were an organized force in only one nation, and the betrayal of social-democracy came to the great mass of the workers as a shock that was unexpected and not prepared for. Today, organized groups of revolutionary internationalists exist in nearly every nation, and are actively forging the parties of the Fourth International; today the Second and Third Internationalists have announced their betrayal beforehand, and we will thus not be tripped by surprise; and today we have the rich experience and lessons of the past generation to draw from.

The struggle against imperialist war is the struggle for socialism, is the struggle for the Fourth International, for the world revolution.

The greatest weakness in the struggle of the Left Wing has been the failure to develop fully the implications of the conflict in programmatic terms and to conduct the struggle on this basis. This accounts for the numerous vacillations in the policy of the Left Wing and the repeated compromises with the Old Guard. The limitation of the struggle to questions of organization also holds the door open to new compromises and combinations which can arrest the progressive tendency and enable the extreme right wing to regain its lost organizational positions and conquer new ones. Such possibilities leave the course of the internal struggle in the next months somewhat uncertain. Only the actions taken at the forthcoming convention will indicate clearly and decisively the further directions of the S. P.

It is the task and duty of the revolutionary forces to follow each phase of this process within the Socialist Party with the utmost care and attention, and to seek throughout, by political criticism, to aid actively in producing the most fruitful results possible for the advancement of the revolutionary movement in this country. The specific outcome during the coming months will determine the precise attitude to be taken by the Workers Party. The National Committee is instructed to follow the further developments in the Socialist Party actively from this point of view.

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READ THE NEW MILITANT

THREE EDITIONS -- THREE VERSIONS

BIOGRAPHY A LA STALIN

First Edition . . .

"L. D. Trotsky (N. Trotsky): born in 1879, active in the Workers' Circle in the city of Nikolayev; in 1898 exiled to Siberia, soon after escaped abroad and participated in the Iskra. Delegate from the Siberian League at the Second Congress of the Party. After the split in the Party, adhered to the Mensheviks. Even prior to the revolution, in 1905, he advanced his own and today particularly noteworthy theory of the permanent revolution, in which he asserted that the bourgeois revolution of 1905 must pass directly into the socialist revolution, being the first of the national revolutions; he defended his theory in the newspaper Nachalo, the central organ of the Menshevik faction published during November-December, 1905, in Petersburg. After the arrest of Khrustalev-Nossar, he was elected Chairman of the First Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Arrested together with the Executive Committee on December 3, 1905, he was sent into life exile to Ogdorsk, but escaped en route and emigrated abroad. Trotsky chose Vienna to live in, and there he issued a popular labor newspaper, Pravda, to be circulated in Russia; he broke with the Mensheviks and attempted to form a group outside of all factions; however, during the factional struggle abroad he made a bloc with the Mensheviks and the Vperedovists against the bloc between Lenin and Plekhanov who fought against the liquidators. From the very beginning of the imperialist war he took a brilliant internationalist position, participated in the publication of Nashe Slovo, and adhered to Zimmerwald. Deported from France he went to the United States. On his return from there after the February revolution, he was arrested by the English and set free only on the demand of the Provisional Government, which was forced to intervene under the pressure of the Petersburg Soviet. In Petersburg he entered the organization of the 'Mejrayonists', together with whom he joined the Bolshevik Party at the Sixth Party Congress, in July, 1917, in Petersburg. After the July days, he was arrested by the Government of Kerensky and indicted for 'leading the insurrection', but was shortly freed under the pressure of the Petersburg proletariat. After the Petersburg Soviet went over to the Bolsheviks, he was elected Chairman, and in this capacity he organized and led the insurrection of October 25. Standing member of the C.E.C. of the C.P.S.U. since 1917; member of the Council of People's Commissars, first holding the post of People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, then People's Commissar of War." (Our emphasis)

The above brief biography of Trotsky appeared in a note to the first edition of Lenin's Collected Works, Volume XIV, part 2, page 481. Lenin was then still alive.

Second Edition . . .

After Lenin died, a second edition of his Collected Works was issued by the Lenin Institute. We give below the "biographical note" of the Stalinist historians as it was dished up after Trotsky's expulsion, in Volume XXI, page 571:

"L. D. Trotsky, (born 1879): worked in the city of Nikolayev, participated in the South Russian Workers' League. In 1898 was arrested and exiled to the Irkutsk province, from where he escaped abroad in 1902. In 1903 participated in the Second Party Congress, and after the split in the Party, while remaining with the Mensheviks, he participated closely in the Iskra. During the first revolution in 1905 he worked in Petersburg. Adherent of Parvus's theory of the permanent revolution. When the Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies was organized, he entered into its Executive Committee and later became Chairman. After the arrest of the Petersburg Soviet, he was exiled to Siberia but en route to exile fled from Berezov and participated in the London Congress. Living in Vienna, he formed his own group, the ideological expression of which was a paper he published, Pravda. In 1912, participated in the so-called 'August Bloc', created for the struggle against the Bolsheviks. During the imperialist war he was a member of the editorial board of the internationalist organ, Nashe Slovo, published in Paris. He took part in Zimmerwald, holding a 'centrist' position, and not adhering to the Zimmerwald left. In 1916, on the charge of carrying on internationalist propaganda, he was deported from France to Spain, and from there, after his arrest, he was again deported to America. In 1917, upon his arrival at Petrograd, he joined the internationalist organization of 'Mejrayonists', and together with them entered into the Bolshevik Party at the Sixth Congress of the C.P.S.U. and was elected to the C.E.C. After the Bolsheviks had conquered the Petrograd Soviet in September, 1917, Trotsky became its Chairman. After October, he became People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs. During the controversy over the Brest-Litovsk Peace, he was a staunch opponent of the latter, favoring the tactic 'No Peace, No War'. After the Brest Peace, he became People's Commissar of War and Chairman of the Revolutionary War Council of the Republic, up to 1924. During the discussion in 1920-21, he headed one of the factions formed at that time, defending the necessity of 'Stafifying' the trade unions. In 1923 he went over to the Opposition; from 1926 the leader of the 'United' Opposition. In 1927, expelled from the party." (Our emphasis)

The above quoted and "improved" biography was to be found even in the "Third Edition" of Lenin's Collected Works up to 1931, and thereafter, until another "Third Edition" was issued by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in 1935.

Third Edition . . .

In this latest Stalinist falsification of history we find the following "biography" in the same volume XXI, on the very same page 571:

"L. D. Trotsky (Bronstein) born 1879—social democrat who headed a 'Centrist' tendency (Trotskyism) in the ranks of the Russian Social Democracy, and who subsequently slid down to the role of the 'advanced troop of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie'. Participated in the Second Party Congress, after the split became a rabid Menshevik. Chairman of the Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies in 1905. Adherent of the semi-Menshevik Parvusite theory of the permanent revolution. In 1912, organized the so-called 'August Bloc' for the struggle against the Bolsheviks. During the war rejected slogan of civil war, defeatism, and the necessity of breaking organizationally with the social chauvinists. His slogan 'No Victories, No Defeats' was a paraphrase of the slogan 'defense of the Fatherland.' In 1917, upon his arrival at Petrograd he joined the 'Mejrayonists', and together with the latter entered the Bolshevik party at the Sixth Congress of the C.P.S.U. and was elected to the C.E.C. After October—People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs. On the question of the Brest Peace, first expressed himself in favor of the tactic 'No Peace, No Wars', and after the offensive was resumed,—for a revolutionary war. After the Brest Peace—People's Commissar of War, and Chairman of the Revolutionary War Committee of the Republic (up to 1924). In 1920-1921, defended the necessity of 'stafifying' the trade unions, and organized a faction on this platform. In 1923-1924 headed the opposition; from 1926, leader of the 'Oppositionist Bloc' (Trotsky-Kamenetz-Zinoviev). Waged a sharp factional struggle against the C.P.S.U. and the Communist International. In November 1927, together with his adherents, he attempted to stage anti-Soviet demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad. Defended the views of the impossibility of building socialism in the U.S.S.R., of the inevitability of the degeneration of the Bolshevik party and the Soviet power, and the probable return to capitalism. At the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. expelled from the party. In 1929, exiled abroad for underground anti-Soviet activity. Abroad, side by side with the White Guards he became one of the polarizing centers of the counter-revolutionary forces inside and outside of the U.S.S.R." (Our emphasis)

In the Museum of the Revolution* in Moscow in a dark corner there is hung and, perhaps, is still hanging, a modest tablet. It bore the following inscription:

"In the nature of things, it is impossible to argue with Trotsky, for he has no views of any sort. It is necessary and obligatory to argue with confirmed liquidators and Otzovists but there is no arguing with a man who plays the role of a screen for the mistakes of both the former and the latter—such a man must be exposed as a diplomat of the worst type."

If one were to take Stalin at his own words, a tablet should be hung in his memory with the inscription:

"He never argued, he only falsified."

*In this museum there is supposedly preserved the record of each and every participant and event in the Russian Revolution (even prior to 1905). The above mentioned tablet is the only record of Trotsky's participation in the revolutionary struggles of the Russian proletariat. It was copied by a tourist.

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